

and troops engaged overseas, I am proud to introduce this amendment with Senators UDALL of New Mexico and BINGAMAN which addresses a dual front plaguing our country's war heroes. That dual front emerges from two troubles that exist for our veterans dealing with the horrors of war abroad and lack of affordable housing at home.

This sad duality has a dark and tragic reality. To date, one out of every three homeless men sleeping somewhere in our cities and communities is a veteran. Veterans make up a significant and disproportionate amount—over 20 percent—of our country's homeless population. The number of homeless Vietnam-era veterans is greater than the number of service persons who died during that war. Regrettably, this dark shadow cast behind our Nation's veterans is stretching because we are seeing homelessness spread to veterans returning from the ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Instead of receiving the services and benefits they deserve, veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan—as well as many American families—are at greater risk of homelessness due to a number of factors, such as the economic downturn, the acute shortage of affordable housing, and lingering mental health illnesses. Further, despite the efforts of the federal government and its partners at the State and local levels and their progress in addressing homelessness, there remain too many gaps in our safety net system to prevent homelessness.

For our troops and their families to whom we owe so much, who make great contributions to defend our country, and who risk their lives; is homelessness an acceptable outcome for them? Clearly, the answer is no. That is why I am proud to support this amendment with my colleagues from New Mexico and I value the work I have been a part of with my other colleagues and friends like Senators MURRAY, MIKULSKI, REED, and HUTCHISON.

This amendment sends a clear and strong message that we cannot allow our veterans to return to their communities without providing them the support they need. This is why we introduced this amendment which combines the necessary support and housing services to help our veterans. Veterans need a comprehensive approach that begins with secure and stable housing in order to provide them the opportunity to reintegrate into society and support their families. Our amendment fully funds the Homeless Grant and Per Diem Program, which is administered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and promotes the development of supportive housing and services with the goals of helping homeless veterans achieve residential stability, increase their skill levels and income and develop greater self-determination. In closing, I thank my colleagues from New Mexico and the managers of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill for their sup-

port. I sincerely believe that the passage of this amendment will be another example of our shining and unwavering commitment to our veterans.

PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

Mr. BURRIS. Mr. President, in the last century, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., spoke often of “the arc of the moral universe” and how it bends toward justice. He held an optimistic but unvarnished view of our country and saw that America's greatness lives in the promise of expanding equality and opportunity.

Sadly, for parts of our history, the halls of civil discourse were closed to people of color, women, and other groups. Too many Americans were denied the freedom that our founding documents guaranteed to every individual, and for far too long. But here in the United States, it is inevitable that justice wins out over tyranny in the end.

Thanks to the leadership of Dr. King and countless other trailblazers—of all races, backgrounds, and walks of life—today's America is more free, more fair, and more equal than our forefathers could possibly have dreamed. And today, I come to the floor in honor of one of these real-life trailblazers.

Twenty-five years ago, it was almost inconceivable that a person of color could become President of the United States. But that did not stop the Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, Sr., from mounting a serious campaign. Some applauded the effort, and some decried it as foolishness. Some said that America was not ready. But Reverend Jackson was undeterred. He laid righteous claim to the values that define us as Americans, and he shared his vision with all those who would listen and some who would not. And under his leadership, an otherwise ordinary Presidential campaign became a movement. People across America were inspired by what they saw, what they heard, and what they read. They turned out in droves to campaign for Reverend Jackson, to hear him speak, and to offer their support.

Twenty-five years ago, Rev. Jesse Jackson decided to run for President. And his bold campaign changed American politics forever. As Dr. King would say, he and his supporters put their hands on the arc of the moral universe and caused it to bend just a bit further. He broke down barriers, he shattered prejudice, and he paved the way for all who came after. He left an indelible mark on the political and social landscape in this Nation and his contributions will be felt for many years to come.

In 2008, thanks to the leadership and vision of Jesse Jackson, Martin Luther King, Jr., and countless others, America did what was once unthinkable: we elected an African-American man named Barack Obama to the highest office in our land. It was a day I never thought I would be fortunate enough to

see. But it showed the world once again that this is a nation of high ideals and higher aspirations. It proved the enduring truth of the American dream and reinforced the true character of our great country.

This Nation owes a great deal to Reverend Jackson and many like him, who continue to share their talent, their vision, and their abiding faith with the American people. So today, 25 years after his historic run for President, I rise to thank Jesse Jackson for all that he has done and for all that he continues to do. And even as we honor his accomplishments, we know that we can look to the future with optimism, secure in the certain knowledge that we are in control of our destiny.

We, the American people, have the power to determine the course of this Nation, as Reverend Jackson reminded us a quarter of a century ago. That is the legacy to which he belongs—a legacy of equality and opportunity, which he has left to each of us.

Let us honor that legacy and carry it forward, so future generations can share in the ever-expanding promise of the American dream.

CONGRESSIONAL AWARDS PROGRAM

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I am very pleased to have this opportunity to acknowledge one of our great success stories—the Congressional Awards—on the occasion of their 30th anniversary. This is a great milestone in the history of a program that has served to inspire and encourage countless young people across the country since it was first signed into law in 1979.

Thirty years ago, Senator Malcolm Wallop of Wyoming and Congressman James Howard of New Jersey joined forces to establish and promote the Congressional Awards and provide this great opportunity to young people all across the Nation. Today this program is achieving results throughout the United States far beyond what anyone could have ever expected. One by one, students are rolling up their sleeves and getting to work, establishing personal goals as well as goals for community service. Their dedication has made it possible for them to make a great difference in the world right where it should always start—in their own backyard.

The Congressional Awards program has deep Wyoming roots because Malcolm Wallop helped to provide the leadership that led to its creation. It has deep roots in Wyoming because it has inspired our young people to a truly remarkable degree. The popularity of this program extends from one corner of my home State to the other and it continues to spark the imagination and encourage the enthusiastic participation of another group of participants every year.

Because of the great work this program makes possible, I try to attend as many award ceremonies as I possibly